

Anthropology 331

Historical Ecology

Spring 2018

PROFESSOR:

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DESCRIPTION: Historical Ecology. Undergraduate Seminar Course; 1 Unit.

The relationship between the human beings and the environment is a complex, dynamic, and contentious. Historical ecology addresses this relationship over the long term through the physical signatures and patterns of past human activity that are embedded in landscape. In some preindustrial cases, humans caused environmental degradation and societal collapse. In other situations, people transformed, created, and managed resources for sustainable lifeways over centuries and increased biodiversity. This seminar will examine the Myth of the Ecologically Noble Savage, the Myth of the Pristine Environment, domestication of landscape, biocultural diversity, the alliance between native peoples and Green Politics, and the contribution of past societies to appropriate technology, sustainable development, and biodiversity through the historical, ethnographic, and archaeological record.

OFFICE HOURS:

Thursdays 4:30 – 6:00pm or by appointment (email). My office is Penn Museum 435 (Academic Wing). I will be available during office hours, after class, or by appointment if you have any questions regarding the course material, the Department's Major in Anthropology, or Archaeology as a career. You can also reach me by email (cerickso@sas.upenn.edu).

ANTHROPOLOGY 331 HOMEPAGE: A Canvas website for this course can be found on the Penn Website as ANTH 331 *Historical Ecology*. This homepage will include on-line versions of the course description, syllabus, and handouts; updates on reading assignments and lectures; recent news items about historical ecology, native peoples, and the environment; announcements about on-campus seminars and lectures related to the seminar topics; and links to relevant web sites. I recommend saving the address as a "bookmark" and regularly checking the site for new and updated information.

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesday and Thursdays 3:00-4:20pm, Penn Museum 330 (Academic Wing). On certain days, we will meet in the collections rooms of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology to view and study Amazonian artifacts.

REQUIRED ON-LINE READINGS:

Anthropology 331 Historical Ecology Canvas Website: a collection of required readings will be available as PDF format digital files. You will need Adobe Reader© software to view the files. I recommend updating to the most recent version of Adobe Reader©. See the Penn Computing for the free software.

REQUIRED SOFTWARE AND MAPS: *Google Earth*© (3D digital world maps at high resolution). Download the free version of the *Google Earth* from the following website: *Google Earth* website: <https://www.google.com/earth/download/ge/>

COURSE CONTENT:

This seminar focuses on the relationship between past and present humans and the environment, with a focus native peoples and their activities. The course has no prerequisites. I will begin most classes with an orientation lecture and/or case study introducing the topic. At the beginning or end of the lecture, considerable time will be devoted to student discussion of the lecture and reading materials.. Because this course is a seminar, student participation in discussions is required and student must be prepared by having read required readings and taken notes. I may assign rotating individuals or groups of students to lead the discussions.

PowerPoint slides will be used to illustrate concepts and case studies presented in lecture and several films will also be shown as supplementary material. I generally do not stop the lecture to spell terminology, although you will be provided with handouts including lists of important terminology. Questions and comments are encouraged and may be asked before, during, or after lectures. I will also make use of artifacts from the extensive South American collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Penn Museum). On some days, we may meet at the Penn Museum collection rooms instead of in our regular classroom.

REQUIRED READINGS:

A reading syllabus is provided below and on the Canvas website. This syllabus may be periodically updated throughout the semester (using the Announcement Page on Canvas for the class). You must read the required readings before the class meeting and be prepared to discuss the required readings for each class. In addition to detailed class notes, you must take detailed notes while doing the readings. These notes will be valuable for in-class discussions and preparing your papers. I may require detailed notes to be turned in before class if I find that students unprepared for discussion.

GRADING:

Grading is based on three writing assignments (three 10 page papers) and class participation in

seminar discussions. I will discuss the writing assignment, guidelines for preparing your paper, and deadlines in detail later in the semester. I highly recommend that you exchange drafts of your papers with fellow students for editorial comments before submitting draft and final versions. Students will have the opportunity to rewrite their papers for consideration of a higher grade if drafts are received by the due dates (to be announced). Students will be responsible for material presented in the lecture, readings, slide presentations, seminar discussions, artifact presentations, tours of the Penn Museum collections, and films. The draft and final version paper due dates will be announced).

Writing Assignments: I will discuss each writing assignment in detail later in the semester.

Assignment 1: see Handout: date to be announced (30% of final grade)

Assignment 2: see Handout: date to be announced (30% of final grade)

Assignment 3: Object Study; see Handout: date to be announced (30% of final grade)

Participation in the seminar discussions (10% of final grade)

Grading Scale:

A: 95-100

B: 88-94

C: 81-87

D: 74-80

F: ≤ 73

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to show up for all class meetings (except religious holidays and officially excused absences). Missing a class or two could negatively affect your grade. Please get the notes from other students if you have to miss a class meeting. The professor will not provide copies of lecture notes or *PowerPoint* slide presentations to students.

Laptops may be used to take notes and refer to readings under discussion during class. You can use laptops to take notes in class, but the use of laptops, tablets, or phones for other purposes including email, text messaging, Facebook, Twitter, web surfing, and other non-scholarly social media activities is prohibited. Turn off all cell phones before class starts.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students should be familiar with and respect the Academic Code of Integrity of the University of Pennsylvania. Any cheating or plagiarism in this course will be dealt with severely. Please see the Penn websites below for definitions of what constitutes plagiarism and cheating and how to

avoid them:

Academic Code of Integrity:

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>

Plagiarism - What it is and how to avoid it:

<http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/guides/engineering/ee/plagiarize.html>

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SUMMARY SYLLABUS
(Tentative and subject to change)

- January 11: Introduction
- January 16: The Cofán: an Amazonian Native People, Sovereignty, Management, and Development.
- January 18: Defining Biodiversity
- January 23: Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity
- January 25: Environmental Determinism, Cultural Ecology, Environmental Anthropology, and Evolutionary Ecology
- January 30: The Myth of the Pristine Landscape; Degradation vs. Enhancement of the Environment: How is it Measured? At what Scale? Against what benchmark? Disturbance, Change, and Biodiversity
- February 1: Landscapes, New Ecology, and Disturbance
- February 6: Roots of Historical Ecology
- February 8: Domestication of Landscape
- February 13: What Do Native People Think and Know about the Environment, What can we Learn?
- February 15: Extinction of Megafauna of the Ice Age; Impact of Humans on Pacific Islands.
- February 20: Cooking the Earth: Fire Histories and People
- February 22: Fire in Resource Creation, Transformation, and Management
- February 27: The Myth of the Noble Savage: Native Americans and Conservation

- March 1: The Impact of Indigenous Hunting
- March 6: SPRING BREAK
- March 8: SPRING BREAK
- March 13: Indigenous Hunting as Sustainable Use and Resource Management
- March 15: The Domestication of Plants and Animals
- March 20: Native Agroforestry in the Tropics
- March 22: Pre-Columbian Transformation of the Amazon
- March 27: Amazonian Dark Earth
- March 29: The Andes: A Built Environment; Applied Archaeology
- April 3: The Signature of Settled Life and Farming on the Landscape
- April 5: Cities in the Tropical Forest: The Maya
- April 10: The Jungle as Pharmaceutical Cornucopia: Shamanism, Ethnobotany, Bioprospecting, and Intellectual Property Rights
- April 12: Society for American Archaeology meetings (**class cancelled**)
- April 17: Resource Creation and Management in the Desert Southwest
- April 19: Cities in the Desert
- April 24: Native Peoples and Green Politics: An Uneasy Alliance; Nature Reserves With or Without Native People, Cultural and Ecotourism.